

**COVER PAGE**

**MEASURING ATTRIBUTES OF WILDERNESS CHARACTER  
WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY**

**CDCA224/MESQUITE LAKE  
AUGUST 2015**

**BLM**

**Needles Field Office**



### Summary of Analysis\*

**Area Unique Identifier:** CDCA224/Mesquite Lake

#### Summary

Results of analysis:

(Note: explain the inventory findings for the entirety of the inventory unit. When wilderness characteristics have been identified in an area that is smaller than the size of the total inventory unit, explain why certain portions of the inventory unit are not included within the lands with wilderness characteristics (e.g. the inventory found that certain parts lacked naturalness).

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? ☒ Yes ☐ No
2. Does the area appear to be natural? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A
4. Does the area have supplemental values? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

Check one:

☐ The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

☒ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

#### Prepared by (team members):

Ramona Daniels, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Wilderness Coordinator,  
August 18, 2015

#### Reviewed by (District or Field Manager):

Name: [Signature] Title: FIELD MANAGER

Date: 10-10-15

\* This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-3.

**FORM 1**

**Documentation of BLM Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Findings from Previous Inventory on Record**

**1. Is there existing BLM wilderness characteristics inventory information on all or part of this area?**

☐ **No** (Go to Form 2)

☒ **Yes** (If yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the unique identifiers for those areas.):

**a) Inventory Source:** California Desert Conservation Area Wilderness Inventory 1979

**b) Inventory Area Unique Identifier(s):** CDCA224

**c) Map Name(s)/Number(s):** USGS, California 1:100,000: 35115-E1 Mesquite Lake

**d) BLM District(s)/Field Office(s):** California Desert District/Needles Field Office

**2. BLM Inventory Findings on Record:**

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics (if more than one BLM inventory area is associated with the area, list each area and answer each question individually for each inventory area):

**Inventory Source:** Needles Field Office Inventory

Area Unique Identifier	Sufficient Size? Yes/No (acres)	Naturalness? Yes/No	Outstanding Solitude? Yes/No	Outstanding Primitive & Unconfined Recreation? Yes/No	Supplemental Values? Yes/No
CDCA224	Y	N	N	N	Y

## FORM 2

### Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier: CDCA224  
Acreage: 23,327

(If the inventory area consists of subunits, list the acreage of each and evaluate each separately).

In completing steps (1)-(5), use additional space as necessary.

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below),

Yes   √        No       

Note: If "No" is checked the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check "NA" for the remaining questions below.

Description (describe the boundaries of the area--wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.):

**The western and southern boundary is a graded mining road; known as Old Traction Road; the eastern boundary is a graded road, which leads to the California/Nevada state boundary. The northern boundary is the Kingston/Sandy Valley Road a County Designated Road. Many small routes are located within the boundaries leading to private inholdings and businesses.**

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes             No   √        N/A       

Note: If "No" is checked, the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check "NA" for the remaining questions below.

Description (include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation, and summary of major human uses/activities):

**Per the March 31, 1979 Wilderness Inventory Final Descriptive Narratives, there is a corral, a windmill, and fences in the southern and eastern portions of this area. The northern portion contains several residences on private lands. There are also telephone lines and roads into these homes, which dominate the northern non-public portion in spite of the mesquite trees within this area. These man-made improvements seriously degrade the primeval character of the landscape, and were omitted from the portion that still retains its primeval character. The remaining portion of the area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.**

**This description still holds true for the current analysis, in addition, the lakebed is actively mined for gypsum.**

**The Mesquite Lake Area of Critical Concern (ACEC) was nominated within the September 1980 Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Plan Appendix Volume C. Mesquite Lake is a rich Cultural Resource. It was proposed to protect an important locale of prehistoric human occupation. Located on the Shore of Mesquite Lake in extreme northeastern San Bernardino County, the area was occupied for an extended period by aborigines, and it contains extensive surface and subsurface artifacts. Pothunters and illegal vehicle use threaten the area.**

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ N/A ☒ \_\_\_\_\_

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for solitude):

**The area is used heavily by equestrian riders, however do to adjacent uses and routes within the area, opportunities of solitude do not exist within the area.**

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ N/A ☒ \_\_\_\_\_

Note: If "No" is checked for both 3 and 4 the area does not have wilderness characteristics; check "NA" for question 5.

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

**The opportunities exist however due to the influence of mining operations and adjacent private residence and community the opportunities are lacking.**

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ N/A ☒ \_\_\_\_\_

Description:

**The area contains numerous mesquite thickets, which are quickly disappearing in Southern California. Local Native Americans continue the tradition of harvesting from this natural resource, which are important within their cultural.**

## WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY

### APPENDIX C – ROUTE ANALYSIS<sup>1</sup>

*(Factors to consider when determining whether a route is a road<sup>2</sup> for wilderness characteristics inventory purposes.)*

**Route Analysis Table**

Route #		Purpose	Row	Construction Mechanically or Improved Mechanically	Is it in regular or continuous use	Maintenance if needed	WIU Road	Photo Points
1	NN408	Old County Road (Retired) Access Across Lake	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
2	NN409	Private Inholding	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
3	NN414	Private Inholding	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
4	NN416	Private Inholding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
5	NN406	Rangeland Access	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	
6	NN404	Rangeland Access	No	Yes	Yes	Not Currently	Yes	

**Route Map: See Attached**

Wilderness Characteristics Inventory Area Unique Identifier: **CDCA224**

Route or Route Segment<sup>3</sup> Name and/or Identifier: **See Table**

(Include Transportation Plan Identifier, if known, and include route number supplied by citizen information, when available.)

#### **I. LOCATION:**

Refer attached map **CDCA224/Mesquite Lake** and BLM corporate data (GIS) located at the California State Office. List photo point references (where applicable) and/or reference attached photo log:

Describe:

**As stated in Form 2, the western and southern boundary is a graded mining road; known as Old Traction Road; the eastern boundary is a graded road, which leads to the California/Nevada state boundary. The northern boundary is the Kingston/Sandy Valley Road a County Designated Road. Many small routes are located within the boundaries leading to private inholdings and businesses.**

**This area is heavily used by backcountry touring. It is also associated with a major 4x4/old county road. The Community of Sandy Valley and operations at the gypsum mine use these rural routes on a regular basis in order to access businesses, jobs and major highway access near Primm, Nevada.**

<sup>1</sup> This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-3.

<sup>2</sup> Road: An access route which has been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road.

- a. Improved and maintained – Actions taken physically by people to keep the road open to vehicle traffic. —Improved does not necessarily mean formal construction. —Maintained does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.
- b. Mechanical means – Use of hand or power machinery or tools.
- c. Relatively regular and continuous use – Vehicular use that has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources, access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities, or access roads to mining claims.

<sup>3</sup> If a portion of a route is found to meet the wilderness inventory road criteria (see Part III) and the remainder does not meet these criteria (e.g., a cherry system road with a primitive route continuing beyond a certain point), identify each segment and explain the rationale for the separate findings under pertinent criteria.

## II. ROUTE CONTEXT

- A. Current Purpose<sup>4</sup> (if any) of Route: (Examples: Rangeland/Livestock Improvements (stock tank, developed spring, reservoir, fence, corral), Inholdings (ranch, farmhouse), Mine Site, Concentrated Use Site (camp site), Recreation, Utilities (transmission line, telephone, pipeline), Administrative (project maintenance, communication site, vegetation treatment)).

Describe:

Within the Northern & Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan (NECO), an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan 1980 and Sikes Act Plan with the California Department of Fish and Game, a series of routes were designed for use for the public. On page 3-64, section 3.8.7. California Back Country Discovery Trails: "The California back Country Discovery Trails...will be a shared-use trail system providing recreational opportunities for all persons, including those who use street-legal and non-street legal (Green Sticker) vehicles, hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians. It will also provide a backcountry opportunity for non-traditional trail users such as persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and families with small children." BLM Needles Field Office (NFO) developed this system of California Back Country Discovery Trails for all designated routes within the field office boundaries and named it the Mojave Adventure Route System (MARS). This system of designated routes was developed to minimize resource damage, as well as providing a system of backcountry touring routes, which offer ample recreational experiences: (i.e., camping, hunting, rockhounding, etc.) for all members of the public. The NFO receives funding annually from both federal and state programs to maintain and monitor on a need to basis, the management of these routes also includes the placement of field cameras for the monitoring of use, repairing flood damage, and the installation of route signs and informational kiosks.

B. Right-of-Way (ROW):

1. Is there a ROW associated with this route?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No ☒ Unknown \_\_\_\_

2. If yes, what is the stated purpose of the ROW?

3. Is the ROW still being used for this purpose?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No ☒ Unknown or N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Explain:

### III. WILDERNESS INVENTORY ROAD CRITERIA

A. Evidence of construction or improvement using mechanical means:

Yes ☒ (if either A.1 or A.2 is checked "yes" below) No \_\_\_\_\_ (if both A.1 and A.2 are checked "no" below)

1. Construction: (Is there evidence that the route or route segment was originally constructed using mechanical means?) Yes ☒ No \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: Paved \_\_\_\_\_ Bladed \_\_\_\_\_ Graveled \_\_\_\_\_ Roadside Berms \_\_\_\_\_ Cut/Fill \_\_\_\_\_ Other ☒

Describe:

**Some of the roads within the area were installed as access to mining operations and old country rural roads. These routes were developed by use of heavy equipment. Other roads have been dragged by mechanical means in order to remove ruts and holes. Locals have dragged routes within this area.**

<sup>4</sup> The purpose of a route is not a deciding factor in determining whether a route is a road for wilderness characteristics inventory purposes. The purpose of a route does provide context for factors on which such a determination may be based, particularly the question of whether maintenance of the route ensures relatively regular and continuous use. The purpose also helps to determine whether maintenance that may so far have been unnecessary to ensure such use would be approved by BLM when the need arises.

2. Improvements: (Is there evidence of improvements using mechanical means to facilitate access?) Yes ☒ No \_\_\_\_\_ If "yes": by Hand Tools \_\_\_\_\_ by Machine \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: Culverts \_\_\_\_\_ Hardened Stream Crossings \_\_\_\_\_ Bridges \_\_\_\_\_ Drainage \_\_\_\_\_ Barriers ☒  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe:

**In 2002, after the designation of routes, numerous other routes within the area were closed, using berms and barriers, berms were also used to keep vehicles on the designated routes system. Many of these berms can be found within the southern end of this unit. Vegetation has completely overgrown many of the berms and they are hard to identify. No other work is required presently.**



B. Maintenance: (Is there evidence of maintenance that would ensure *relatively* regular and continuous use?): Yes ☒ (if either B.1 or B.2 is checked "yes" below) No ☐ (if both B.1 and B.2 are checked "no" below)

1. Is there Evidence or Documentation of Maintenance using hand tools or machinery?

Yes ☒ No ☐ If "yes": by Hand Tools ☐ by Machine ☐

Explain:

**The maintenance team completed work around NN0401 in December 2014. The signing team worked in the area during 2013.**

2. If the route or route segment is in good<sup>5</sup> condition, but there is no evidence of maintenance, would mechanical maintenance with hand tools or machines be approved by BLM to meet the purpose(s) of the route in the event this route became impassable?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Explain:

**As part of the MARS, the route would continue to receive maintenance by the NFO on a need to basis.**

<sup>5</sup> Good condition would be a condition that ensures regular and continuous use relative to the purposes of the route. Consider whether the route can be clearly followed in the field over its entire course and whether all or any portion of the route contains any impediments to travel.

C. Relatively regular and continuous use: (Does the route or route segment ensure relatively regular and continuous use?) Yes ☒ No ☐

Describe evidence (e.g., direct, vehicles or vehicle tracks observed, or indirect, evidence of use associated with purpose of the route such as maintenance of facility that route accesses) and other rationale for whether use has occurred and will continue to occur on a *relatively* regular basis (i.e., regular and continuous use relative to the purpose(s) of the route).<sup>6</sup>

Describe: **See above information.**

#### IV. CONCLUSION:

Does the route or route segment<sup>7</sup> meet the definition of a wilderness inventory road (i.e., are items III.A and III.B and III.C all checked yes)?

Yes ☒ = Wilderness Inventory Road No ☐ = Not a road for wilderness inventory purposes

Explanation<sup>8</sup>:



Office: Needles Field Office  
Unit: CDCA224/Mesquite Lake

**WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY  
APPENDIX D – PHOTO LOG**

See Attached

# CDCA 224 - Mesquite Lake

Photo Point

California Desert Conservation Area

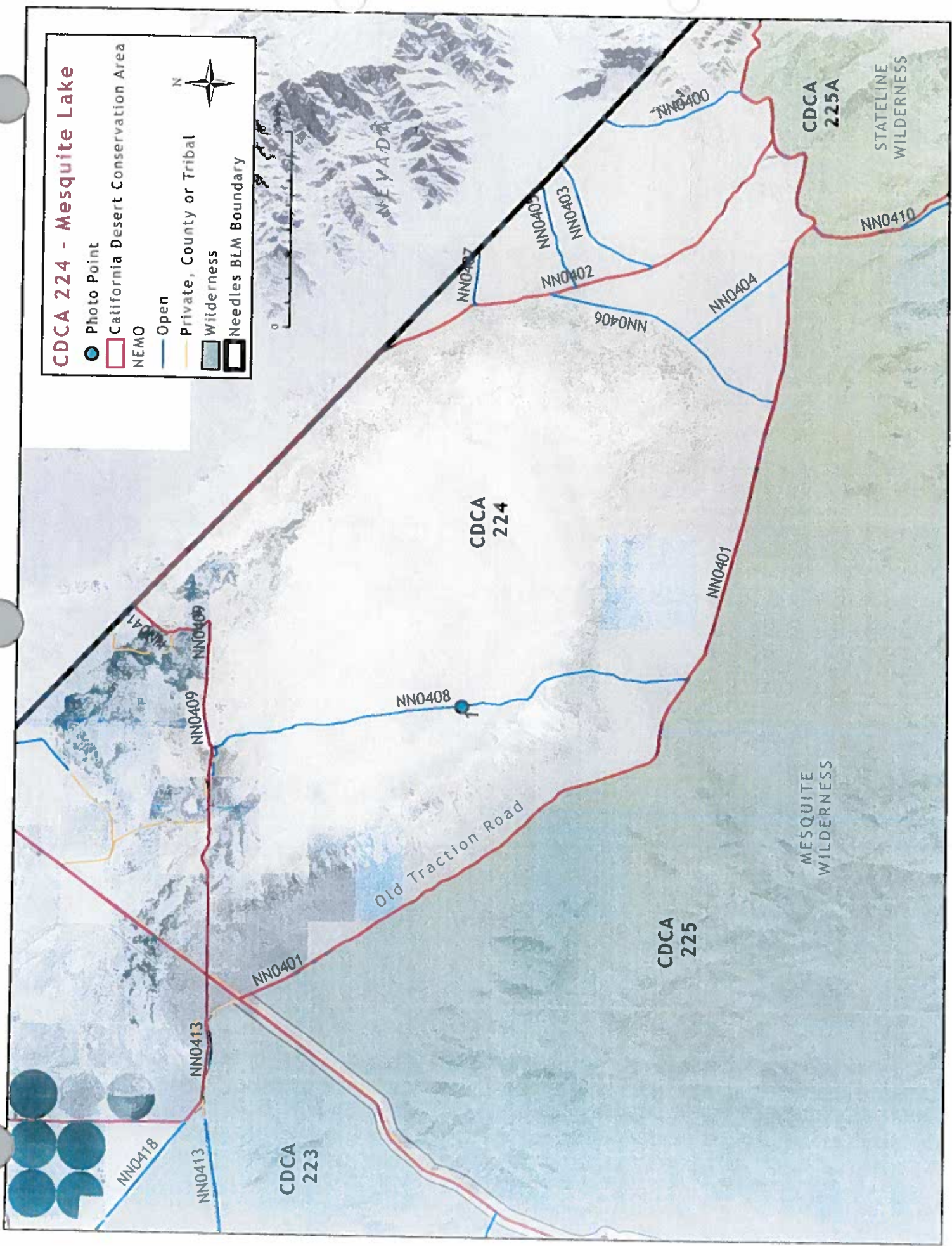
NEMO

Open

Private, County or Tribal

Wilderness

Needles BLM Boundary



# WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS INVENTORY

## APPENDIX D – PHOTO LOG

Photographer(s): Nate Stewart

Inventory Area Unique Identifier 224

[illegible]



CDCA 224 – Mesquite Lake Photo Points

Point 1



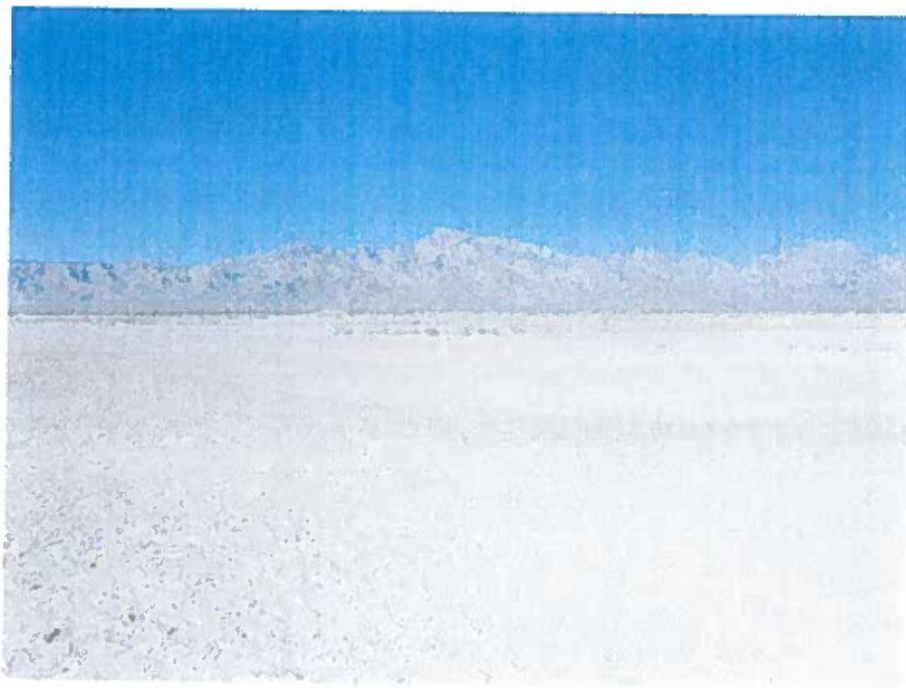
North



West



South



East